

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims

Claims 1-26 (cancelled)

27. (New) A valve assembly for sealed reception of an elongated object, comprising:

 a valve body having at least one opening configured and dimensioned to permit entry of an elongated object and defining a central longitudinal axis, the valve body including an internal recess; and

 a seal member disposed within the internal recess of the valve body, the seal member including at least one substrate and a plurality of flexible bristle members extending radially inwardly relative to the at least one substrate, the bristle members being arranged to define an aperture through the seal member for permitting passage of the elongated object therethrough in substantially fluid tight relation therewith, the bristle members being further arranged to form a taper to facilitate insertion of the elongated object, each bristle member being adapted to be displaced relative to the longitudinal axis to facilitate expansion of the aperture of the seal member upon entry of the elongated object therein.

28. (New) The valve assembly of claim 27, wherein the at least one substrate comprises a first substrate and a second substrate oppositely arranged within the internal recess of the valve body.

29. The valve assembly of claim 27, wherein the plurality of bristle members extend inwardly to define the aperture.

30. The valve assembly of claim 27, wherein the plurality of bristle members have end portions disposed on the at least one substrate.

31. The valve assembly of claim 27, wherein the at least one substrate comprises an annular substrate and wherein the plurality of bristle members extend inwardly.

32. The valve assembly of claim 27, wherein the plurality of bristle members comprise a resilient material.

33. The valve assembly of claim 27, further comprising a stabilizing plate mounted adjacent the seal member.

34. A surgical valve assembly for sealed reception of an elongated object, comprising:

a valve body having at least one opening configured and dimensioned to permit entry of an elongated object and defining a central longitudinal axis, the valve body including an internal recess;

a seal member disposed within the internal recess of the valve body, the seal member including at least one substrate and a plurality of flexible bristle members extending radially inwardly relative to the at least one substrate, the bristle members being arranged to define an aperture through the seal member for permitting passage of the elongated object therethrough in substantially fluid tight relation therewith, the bristle members being further arranged to form a taper to facilitate insertion of the elongated object, each bristle member being adapted to be displaced relative to the longitudinal axis to facilitate expansion of the aperture of the seal member upon entry of the elongated object therein; and

an access member extending from the valve body, the access member dimensioned for positioning within body tissue and adapted to provide a path for passage of the elongated object.

35. The surgical valve assembly of claim 30, wherein the valve body is detachably connected to the access member.

36. The surgical valve assembly of claim 33, further comprising a housing at a proximal end of the access member, the housing being detachably connected to the valve body.

37. The surgical valve assembly of claim 35, further comprising a housing seal disposed in the housing, for sealing the valve assembly in the absence of an elongated object inserted into the valve assembly.

38. The surgical valve assembly of claim 36, further comprising a stabilizing plate for supporting the housing seal during introduction and withdrawal of an elongated object.